

# FAMILY AND ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN DIFFERENT CULTURES: ITS RELEVANCE TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

*Family has been a social institution of central importance in human societies, but, in spite of its universality, it has shown variation in different cultures. This variation consists both in the internal characteristics of the family in specific cultures and its relations with the individuals and other social institutions, like the state. In moral psychology and philosophy family is seen as one of the “moral circles”, which contains the individual but is in turn contained in larger moral circles like the community, the nation and the country. The first part of this paper briefly discusses the relations and tensions between the institution of family in Ancient Greek and Ancient Chinese traditions and the individual and the state. It is argued that both traditions debated the relation between family and state as well as the relation between family and individual. The final part of the paper shifts its attention to modern times and argues that the relations between family and other social institutions are of central importance in understanding the differences between cultures that exist in areas covered by China’s Belt and Road Initiative. It is argued that cultural practices and policies that affect the nature of modern families in different regions may have long-term consequences for international relations*

**KEYWORDS:** *Belt and Road Initiative, Social Institutions, Family, State, Individual & Family Planning*

**Received:** Jul 02, 2019; **Accepted:** Jul 22, 2019; **Published:** Sep 04, 2019; **Paper Id.:** IJPSLIRDEC20192

## INTRODUCTION

Family is a central social institution in every culture and its relations with other social institutions play an important role in determining the role of the family in specific societies. According to a theory of metaphors, humans tend to conceptualize more abstract concepts based on ones that are directly available to their senses. For example, we tend to conceptualize “understanding” as “seeing”, as the expression “I see” (meaning “I understand”) shows. Similarly, more abstract social institutions like the “state” are often conceptualized based on less abstract concepts like “family” or the “human body” (Lakoff 1996). The concept of moral circles has been popularized by the moral philosopher Peter Singer although related concepts had been discussed centuries ago. Originally, the moral circle was debated among philosophers, but it has recently drawn increased attention in moral psychology (Bloom 2004; Singer 2011). The concept of “moral circle” can be defined as the boundary drawn around those entities in the world deemed worthy of moral consideration” (Laham 2009: 250). Singer argued that the moral circle has been expanding through the history of humanity and is related to human evolution. Bloom (2004) showed that this is the case with child development as babies seem to start with an ego-centered concept of morality which gradually expands to include a wider range of people around them.

Different societies may be characterized by different moral circles and different degrees of institutionalization of such circles. For example, in some societies, religious communities may be formally institutionalized whereas in other societies they may refer to informally connected groups of people. In this paper,

the institution of the family is discussed under the light of its relations with the self (the ego-circle) and the state, i. e. a circle wider than family. The relation between the family and the state as social institutions was the focus of important debates both in Ancient Greece and in Ancient China. After exploring these debates, examples of tensions between the family, on one hand, and the individual and the state, on the other hand, in modern West and modern China are discussed.

Although the discussion of tensions between family and state or individual is not directly related to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it can be argued that understanding the relationship between family and other social institutions in different cultures covered in area of BRI is important for at least two reasons: 1) a better understanding of intercultural differences regarding family and its relation to other important institutions such as the state can improve intercultural communication, the promotion of which is one of the central aims of BRI (Wang ); 2) studying family in different cultures is important for the understanding of demographic/ population dynamics in different areas of the BRI and predict patterns of future population migration.

### **Ancient Greece: The Debate about Family and the State between Plato and Aristotle**

In ancient Greek literature and philosophy, there are many cases where the private sphere, including family, comes to conflict with the state. This tension has been framed in many ways in the Homeric epic poems, in tragedies, comedies and so on, but due to space limitations, the focus here will be on Plato and Aristotle, two philosophers of the late classical period.

The main topic of Plato's Republic is the "just city" which is conceptualized as consisting of different parts corresponding to the parts of the human soul. Regarding families, in Book V, Socrates argues that the classes that govern the ideal city, i. e. the guardians and the philosopher-king, should not have families as family ties may distract them from their duties towards the city. The guardians, whose role is to protect the city, can mate with female guardians, but they cannot marry them, nor can they know who their children are. The children are brought up by the city (by a body of specialized caregivers) and therefore are loved by everyone in the city the same. By abolishing the institution of family, Plato aims to make sure that the guardians will be fully devoted to the city as they will feel no particular attachments to their families. Although this idea sounds radical nowadays and it was quite extreme in Plato's times too, it was not without precedents. For example, in Sparta, a city-state with characteristics that Plato often admired, boys would be taken away from their families to live and train with their peers to forge ties that would ensure a powerful military, something of which Sparta was famous. Aristophanes too, in his comedy Ecclesiazusai ('The Assembly Women', written circa 392BC), presents women taking over Athens and establishing a society without families.

In spite of Plato's powerful argument in the Republic, Aristotle, who had studied at the Academy (Plato's school) and later founded his own school (Peripatos), argued against the abolition of family and in general against the image of a society that is characterized by homogeneity as was Plato's ideal city. Specifically, in his Politics, Aristotle discusses household ("oikos"), a social unit including a family and their slaves, as a social institution that is part of the city-state. Although Aristotle believes that the city-state is an institution qualitatively different than others and is the best form for an organized political unit, he points out that the households are parts of the states and if they were dissolved, as in Plato's Republic, the effects on the state would be negative. Family is seen as an institution that organically belongs to the state and performs important functions in it, like functioning as a small version of society in which children learn to become responsible citizens. In essence, Aristotle argues against Plato's view of an extremely unified, undifferentiated society. Children who belong to society as a whole will not be loved by anyone while the family are needed to provide for them and

socialize them. Family and city-state are seen in relations of part and whole: the part (family) cannot be more important than the whole (city), but it is an organic relation with it (Saunders 1995).

### **Ancient Chinese Thought**

Very much like Ancient Greek thinkers debated the relations between family and different social institutions, similar debates can be found in Chinese philosophy in spite of differences in the political units that characterized the two worlds. A concept that has dominated discourses around family and other social institutions is that of “filial piety”, which can be found in different forms in every culture but China (and other East Asian societies) is unique in the centrality it assigns to this concept.

The importance of family in Confucian thinking is illustrated by Mencius assertion that not having offspring, i.e. not having a full family of his/ her own is the worst of the cardinal sins the most unfilial type of behavior a child could have towards his/ her parents (Ivanhoe 2004: 191). In Confucian thought (as well as in other schools of Chinese philosophy) the family is seen as the context in which ancestors are worshipped and traditions are observed and like in Ancient Greece family is seen as the main context of child social learning and education. In this sense, filial piety has been seen not just as a concept describing proper behavior or feelings towards parents but a more general way to conceptualize relations between individuals and those who are in positions of authority like teachers and political rulers.

In relation to this Ivanhoe (2004:196) points out, “filial piety is not just a general feeling of gratitude for a kindness done for one’s own sake. It is partially constituted by the sense that this kindness was done by someone who was dramatically more powerful than oneself and who sacrificed substantial goods of their own in order to care for one. This can help us to understand why Confucian thinkers regularly assert that filial piety is the proper paradigm for the subject–ruler relationship as well as the child–parent relationship” [emphasis mine, AP].

A brief examination of one of the most widely read Confucian classics, *Xiaojing* (usually translated as the “Classic of Filial Piety”)<sup>1</sup>, contains references to this conceptualization of filial piety which should be seen as expanding beyond the family moral circle. In the first chapter of *Xiaojing*, which consist of brief dialogues between Master Kong (Confucius) and his disciple Zengzi, the centrality of the concept of *xiao* (“filial piety”) is explicitly stated:

“It is family reverence (*xiao*),” said the Master, “that is the root of excellence, and whence education (*jiao*) itself is born [...] “Your physical person with its hair and skin are received from your parents. Vigilance is not allowing anything to do injury to your person is where family reverence begins; distinguishing yourself and walking the proper way (*dao*) in the world; raising your name high for posterity and thereby bringing esteem to your father and mother—it is in these things that family reverence finds its consummation. This family reverence, then, begins in service to your parents, continues in service to your lord, and culminates in distinguishing yourself in the world” (Rosemont and Ames 2009: 105 emphasis mine, AP).

The virtue of filial piety covers all social strata from the emperor to commoners and is the linchpin of social and political order. In a way similar to Plato’s Republic where different social classes are assigned specific roles and people

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It is important to point out that although “filial piety” is the most widely used translation of the Ancient Chinese *xiao*, a translation that better reflects the content of this concept is “family reverence”, as Rosemont and Ames (2009) argue. Here, the widely used translation will be adopted for the sake of clarity keeping in mind Rosemont and Ames’ translation as more appropriate.

belonging to them should not cross boundaries, in the *Classic of Filial Piety*, filial piety is seen as the way to maintain harmony in society as it ensures people know their respective roles. In chapter 20, the connection between the virtue of filial piety and social harmony is made clear:

“Those who are truly able to serve their parents are not arrogant in high station, are not rebellious in a subordinate position and are not contentious when only one among many. To be arrogant in high station leads to ruin; to be rebellious in low position incurs punishment” (Rosemont and Ames 2009: 111)

Contrary to Plato, who saw family ties as antagonistic to qualities of the ideal citizens, the Confucian thought puts forward a metaphor and sees the state as based on the same principles as family. Family values are of central importance to the political organization as they guarantee social harmony and therefore transcend relations at all moral circles from family to state.

The centrality of the concept of filial piety in Chinese thought becomes more evident when one looks at works beyond Confucianism. For example, although Buddhism in its early stages was not centrally preoccupied with family values and concepts such as filial piety, in its sinicized form it developed texts focusing on this very concept. The so-called *Sutra of Filial Piety* is an apocryphal Buddhist text that was supposedly translated from a lost Sanskrit original by the famous translator Kumarajiva. Nevertheless, it is more likely this sutra was composed by a Chinese monk as a response to the *Classic of Filial Piety* and its popularity. The sutra provides a Buddhist context for its presentation of the concept of filial piety, but the content of the concept is strikingly similar to that of Confucian texts (Ch'en 1968). For example, towards the end of the sutra it is stated:

“If there was a person who carries his father on his left shoulder and his mother on his right shoulder until his bones were ground to powder by their weights as they bore through to the marrow, and if that person was to circumambulate Mount Sumeru for a hundred thousand kalpas until the blood that flowed out covered his ankles, that person would still not have repaid the deep kindness of his parents.” (The *Filial Piety Sutra*<sup>2</sup>)

The presence of Buddhist symbols, like the holy Mount Sumeru or the term “kalpa” signifying a very long period cannot hide the fact that filial piety is derived from the deep feeling of gratitude children have towards their parents whose kindness they can never repay in full.

### **Legalism (“Fa-Isim”)**

Although the Chinese traditional thought was dominated by Confucianism, other schools of thought emerged and, in many cases, criticized some of the Confucian arguments. In the case of family and the concept of filial piety, thinkers that later were grouped under the label of “fa-ists” or legalists often adopted views radically different than Confucianists. The focus of legalists was on the effectiveness of state-level institutions and saw that family networks often antagonized them thus harming the state. It is characteristic that unlike Mencius, legalists often saw having many children leading to a fast-growing population as a potential problem for the central administration of the state as larger populations would require larger food supplies and likely food shortages would cause social unrest. As Han Feizi, the most known legalist philosopher pointed out.

“Nowadays, five children are not considered too many, and each child also has five children; the grandfather is still alive, and he already has twenty-five grandchildren. Therefore, the people are plenty while commodities and goods are

few; people work laboriously, but provisions are scanty; hence the people compete” (*Han Feizi* 49: 443) [quoted in Pines (2017)- emphasis mine, AP]

In this way, unlike Confucians, Legalists saw the possibility of tension between the social institutions of family and state. As they prioritized the needs of the state over those of the family, although they did not advocate the abolition of family, as Plato did, they argued that the state is justified to use coercion in order to become more powerful and efficient while moral norms based on the social institution of family were seen as irrelevant.

The central concept for legalists is *fa* which can loosely be translated as “objective standard”, i.e. a standard that can be applied to everyone irrespective of his/her family affiliation. As the Han dynasty historian Sima Tan pointed out legalists often did not draw distinctions between “kin and stranger” and therefore they did not focus on drawing explicit boundaries between social classes, like nobles and commoners, but, for them, everything was determined by the objective standard *fa* (Pines 2017).

In conclusion, we can see that the institution of family and its relation to the state was an important topic of debate among different schools of thought both in Ancient Greece and in Ancient China. In all cases, thinkers attempted to show which type of relationship would be most beneficial for the state. Confucians and other schools of thought in China argued that the concept of filial piety should expand across moral circles and institutions and serve as the glue that secured social and political harmony. Aristotle too saw the family (in the form of a household) as an important part of the city-state in the sense that it would serve as an environment of social and political learning, but he also believed that the family and the state were qualitatively different institutions. Plato and legalist philosophers saw the potential of incompatibility between an ideal or an efficient state and typed of behaviour based on family ties.

### **Modern Individualist Societies**

In modern individualist societies, the main tension is between the individual and other social institutions including family and the state. The rise of (individual) human rights discourse and tensions with the advent of “group rights” especially after the end of WWII show point to these tensions. It is hard to find concepts related to that of individual rights in modern western thinking both in Ancient Greece and in China.

In Marx’s writings, the concept of rights (meaning individual rights) was criticized as it was seen as a way to help to create inequalities in society. As Marxist-socialist systems are based on the idea of an equal distribution of wealth in society, they presuppose a society characterized by a high degree of trust between its members and high levels of unity. The concepts of (individual) and group rights seem to undermine this idea of trust as they offer individuals and minorities extra privileges in relation to society as a whole.

The tension between individual and family has become more acute since the development of Freud’s psychoanalysis where relations between family members were conceptualized in psychoanalytic terms as part of the human sub consciousness and undermined the idea of a rational human being that follows moral norms.

A characteristic example of how the individual is alienated and eventually crushed by his/her family is provided in Kafka’s masterpiece *Die Verwandlung* (The Metamorphosis)<sup>3</sup>. In “The Metamorphosis”, Gregor Samsa, a hardworking son who provides for his family (including his parents), wakes up one day to find out he has transformed into a dung beetle.

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<sup>3</sup>The Metamorphosis was written in 1912 and was published in 1915.

The story then shows how Gregor tries to adapt to his change and the negative reactions from his family environment who try to isolate him and hide him from their friends as they consider him an embarrassment for the family. The cynical attitude of his father towards Gregor is clearly shown in his reaction when he learns that Gregor has died, and he thanks God for it. The family quickly forgets Gregor and focuses on other endeavors thus writing the epilogue of his tragic story. It is characteristic that Kafka's other works such as the unfinished *Der Process* (*The Trial*), where the main character (Joseph K.) faces persecution and arrest and eventually his annihilation by a faceless and cruel justice system, can be seen as pointing to how state-level institutions can crush individuals (very much like families) (Kafka 2009).

A celebrated example of the western literary tradition that attacks family values is provided by Philip Larkin's widely quoted poem *This Be the Verse* (1971). The first line of the poem sets the tone by claiming "They fuck you up, your mom and dad". In this way, Larkin implicitly draws a connection between the literal meaning of "fuck you up" and its figurative one. The poem continues by showing that "mom and dad" had also suffered the same fate from their own parents so the family is framed as an environment where misery is handed from man to man along with history. The poem concludes by admonishing the reader to break this vicious circle as soon as he/she can by avoiding having any kids (Larkin 2003).

### **The Legalist Tradition in Contemporary China**

In contemporary China, a collectivist society, several policies promulgated by the central government can serve as cases showing tensions between the institutions of family and the state. A prominent example is provided by policies during the late Maoist period usually known as "Cultural Revolution" (Bramall 2009). It is clear that this period was characterized by conflicts and policies at multiple levels, but it can be argued that one strand in Chairman Mao's thought at least since 1963 was to push harder towards eliminating inequality from the Chinese society. Until that time policies aiming at eliminating inequality targeted areas that were also targeted in other socialist states: relations of production (mainly through redistribution of land and abolishing private properties) and means of production (mainly through rapid industrialization programs as was the "Great Leap Forward"). In spite of policies introduced by 1963, it was clear that inequality in China had persisted and for Chairman Mao this was due to factors falling under the third area of Marxist thought, i.e. the so-called superstructure which comprised a wide range of areas related to culture, education, religion, ideology etc. An important aspect of inequality in China was not so much due to income inequality but to inequality of social capital. Social capital largely depends on personal connections and the social status of someone which are in turn determined by his/her family connections. In this context, it comes as no surprise that part of the policies introduced attacked traditional Confucian concepts (including that of filial piety) and the structure of Chinese families. The results of such policies were mixed, and the policies were toned down after the end of the Red Guard Movement (1966–1968) and in the period of Reform and Open-up (post-1978) Confucianism was seen as retaking his position in Chinese culture, especially since the 1990s and in the 2000s with the foundation of Confucius Institutes as the main agents of China's cultural diplomacy.

At the start of the reform and open up period, the new Chinese government had to face the problem of a fast-growing population which by the end of the 1970s had surpassed one billion. Family planning and population control policies were not new to China as well as to other populous states but had shown a mixed record (Greenhalgh 2008). The decision to curb births and impose strict family planning policies initially caused some friction (in the sense that parts of the population felt uncertain about the effects of the new policies which were being implemented gradually across China and felt eager to give birth to more children before the policy's effects became clear as Greenhalgh 2008 argues).

Nevertheless, eventually, fertility rates in China dropped below replacement levels in the 1990s. One result of the one-child policy was that it helped China have very low dependency ratios in the first years of the reforms. This, in turn, resulted in large masses of labor force moving from the country-side and low-productivity jobs to more productive jobs in the newly founded booming industrial centers near the cities. As Bramall (2009) shows, the main source of China's rapid GDP growth in the 1980s and 1990s increased in total factor productivity which was an indirect result of the one-child policy and the low dependency ratio it caused.

The case of the one-child policy in China is an instance of tension between state and family and the imposition of regulations that constrain family to the benefit of the state. In this sense, this policy is another case of legalist thinking in modern China, where Confucianism is typically seen as the dominant ideology representing traditional China. The dominance of Confucianism in modern China cannot be doubted as is made clear by the presence of Confucian Institutes, the power of *guanxi* and the value of filial piety which is pervasive in modern Chinese society. Nevertheless, this does not mean that tensions between the institutions of state and family have eclipsed; on the contrary, the process of rapid modernization has exacerbated them, as was the case in the West albeit in different ways.

It is characteristic that a look at fertility rates and demographic trends in the area initially covered by China's BRI shows that the two cultures briefly discussed here, Europe (representing the West) and China (representing East Asia) show very low fertility rates and trends of population stagnation or decline. On the contrary, areas between them, notably South Asia and the Middle East are generally characterized by higher fertility rates and faster population growth, whereas Africa does contain states with very high population growth such as Ethiopia and Nigeria. These trends are related to Europe, high and young populations in South Asia, the Middle East and in Sub-Saharan Africa together with frequent clashes and violent conflicts and poor governance results into increasing migration to western, economically advanced, states. Western Europe is the main recipient of such migration flows because of its geographic proximity, the relatively open-border policies of some of its members, like Germany or Sweden, and the existence of sizeable minorities from the source countries. As Collier (2013) argued the presence of established groups of previous immigrants in the target countries can act as a powerful pull factor for new immigrants.

Regarding the other area of low fertility rates, China, another insight by Collier (2013) is of relevance. Specifically, Collier shows that the typical immigrant of our times does not come from the extremely poor groups of the source countries but rather from the middle class, i.e. from groups that do possess some material wealth and they can afford the cost of migration. This insight should be examined under the light of China's recent Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which consists of actions in five areas: political coordination, boosting of trade, financial unification, infrastructure investment, and (perhaps most consequentially) people-to-people contact<sup>4</sup>. If the BRI is a grand foreign policy project (or rather a conglomeration of projects and institutions) with which China aims to share part of its wealth with Afro-Eurasian states that endorse the initiative (Wang 2016), then it is logical to assume that activities related to BRI are likely to assist the development of several states from the regions discussed above, i.e. South Asia, Middle East and Africa. Apart from the beneficial effects on the economies of these states, China's BRI is expected to increase connectivity in the regions it covers by the construction of railways, highways, ports, airports etc. Moreover, the part of China's initiative that involves

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<sup>4</sup>Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. (2015, March 28). Retrieved from [http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330\\_669367.html](http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html)

people-to-people contacts aims at boosting student and scholar exchange programs, cultural exchanges, tourism and similar activities. Wang (2016) characterizes it as probably the most important aspect of BRI as it is expected to lay the foundations for the acceptance of China's foreign policy in other states by increasing understanding and by boosting China's soft power. Nevertheless, if seen under the light of the discussion above, China's BRI may have a series of unintended consequences as well. For example, by increasing investment and boosting trade in a range of developing states characterized by relatively high population growth rates, BRI is bound to contribute to the increase of migration out of these countries to wealthier ones. Although the economies of states like Ethiopia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria have started experiencing high growth rates, their relatively high population growth rates result into much slower increases in per capita income. Skilled people in such countries who may feel they cannot fulfill their potential because of poor governance and corruption, are almost certain to seek for opportunities to migrate to richer countries or to countries with more opportunities (like China) draining their home states from precious human capital. This migration will make reforms and changes in the source countries much harder while it is likely to increase resentment from locals in the host countries. Worrying signs of such developments are already seen in various European states with the rise of xenophobia as well as in China (and other Asian states) where media often focus on misbehavior by foreigners and cause waves of xenophobic and racist comments on social media<sup>5</sup>. These tendencies, i.e. increased mobility of populations from areas with higher population growth rates and younger populations to areas with low fertility rates, may result into more conflict-prone environments<sup>6</sup>.

## DISCUSSIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

This brief and highly selective discussion of ways in which the relation between the social institution of family and the state and the individual is conceptualized shows long-lasting tensions and different developments in China and the West, which are the two ends of the area covered by the Belt and Road Initiative. In both Classical Greek philosophy and Ancient China family was seen both as antagonistic and as supportive of the state. China is widely seen as a Confucian society meaning that the Confucian views of family have largely prevailed, but we have seen that although family values such as

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Pfaffman et al (2015) point out that, in a worrying trend, Chinese netizens tend to scapegoat African students or immigrants on social media as they see them as threat to their identity and as a way to expressed grievances to the Chinese government. Similarly, Cheng YinHong (2011) connects Chinese racism to expressions of rising nationalistic feelings which are in turn related to China's rising power and the opening up of Chinese society to foreigners. Such studies hint at potential problems with increased people-to-people contacts between Chinese and certain groups of foreigners which may lead to more conflictual relations. In relation to the discussion about family planning in China, an additional factor adding to the existing concerns is the growing frustration characterized a part of Chinese male population who face difficulties with finding wives and partners because of the gender imbalance in China, the result of continuing one-child policy way beyond the time when fertility rates had dropped (Greenhalgh 2008).

Writing after the end of the Cold War, Huntington (2002) opined that future wars may be caused by one of the following three reasons: the arrogance of the West, the growing assertiveness of the Sinitic civilization (China), or the demographic growth of Islam-majority regions. Although one may have certain objections to Huntington's views and his simplifications, it is important to remember that part of the reasons behind persistent conflicts in the Middle East and Africa is the ability of belligerent groups to recruit among desperate populations of unemployed youth.



filial piety are still important in China, family planning policies hint at traces of legalist thinking in modern times, which emphasized the priority of state interests when they clash with family values. Differently, in the West, an important strand of thought focused on how family often suppresses individual freedoms (often together with the bureaucratic state, as it is clear in Kafka's works). The individual is often seen as trapped in a vicious circle where s/he is trapped in the legacies of his/ her family, parents and ancestors, as in Philip Larkin's popular poem *This Be The Verse*. It could be argued (with a great degree of simplification) that in collectivist contemporary China the focus of the debate has been mostly on the relations between family and state, whereas western thinking has been preoccupied with the relations between the individual and the family (as well as the state).

If one looks at the map of China's BRI and the relevant demographic trends, it is hard to miss the fact that these two regions are nowadays characterized by relatively low fertility rates and small families. Economic development and individualism have played an important role in the west while in China these two factors have been complemented with strict family planning such as one-child policy, with mixed results. Leaving Africa aside, between these two worlds, there's a region dominated by Muslim majority states and India where religious institutions have been more powerful in their relations with the state and the individuals than in the west or in China and East Asia in general. These areas are characterized by considerably higher fertility rates and larger families, which seems to suggest that the presence of powerful religious institutions mediating between the state and the family/ individual may prevent to some extent efforts to implement strict family planning policies. As a central aspect of BRI focuses on connectivity and people-to-people contact, it is sure that migration of people from areas with high rates of population growth to BRI regions with rapidly aging populations and low fertility rates is likely to be facilitated.

In conclusion, ideas and culturally entrenched or politically imposed practices that affect the nature of modern families in different parts of the world may have long-term, deep effects on international relations and the future of our world.

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